United Nations E/2017/15

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 May 2017

Original: English

2017 session
28 July 2016-27 July 2017
Agenda item 15
Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted to the Economic and Social Council in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1823 (XVII) and Council resolution 1817 (LV). It is structured in two parts: the first part provides regional perspectives on two issues active on the current global agenda. The first issue is efforts to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, which is related directly to the main theme of the 2017 session of the Council, namely, eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges. The second issue is regional perspectives on global migration as a contribution to the intergovernmental process towards forging a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration.

The second part covers developments in selected areas of regional and interregional cooperation, including additional policy matters addressed during the sessions of the regional commissions; an update on the regional commissions' support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the regional level, namely, through the organization of regional forums for sustainable development; efforts to promote coherence at the regional level, including through the respective Regional Coordination Mechanisms; and enhanced cooperation among the regional commissions.

17-07833 (E) 250517

Please recycle

I. Regional perspectives on the global agenda

A. Eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities: regional initiatives and perspectives

1. Although income poverty globally has fallen sharply in the past 20 years, considerable challenges remain owing to recent economic and financial crises and a resurgence of poverty across conflict-affected countries.

2. Poverty is distributed unevenly between and across regions, with 50.7 per cent of the world's poor in sub-Saharan Africa, 33.4 percent in South Asia, 9.3 percent in East Asia and the Pacific, 4.4 in Latin America, 1.4 percent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and 0.8 percent in the rest of the world.[1] Poverty in Africa has declined very slowly in the past 25 years, with the absolute number having been almost constant since 2002.[2] This represents a notable geographical shift from 1990, when half of the world's poor resided in East Asia and the Pacific.

3. Latin America remains the region with the highest overall level of socioeconomic inequality, although income inequality was reduced considerably in the region over the past decade. Africa is the world's second most inequitable region.

4. Understanding and addressing inequality is integral to reducing global poverty. Historically, an analysis of inequality has focused on income disparities. Today, there is a growing recognition that inequality is a multidimensional phenomenon and extends to health, education, civic participation and human rights.[3] A rights-based approach seeks to ensure that all citizens enjoy a baseline level of well-being, namely, access to education, health, work, social protection and other rights. All these dimensions are interconnected and, accordingly, require an integrated approach.

Africa

5. Africa's strong growth performance during the past decade, with an annual growth rate averaging nearly 5 per cent, resulted in a lower level of poverty and led to steady progress in education, health and living standards. Nevertheless, the pace of progress has been slow and hampered by high levels of income inequality within countries. Inequality trends across the five subregions of Africa vary considerably. Between 1993 and 2011, West Africa recorded a steady decline, while the decline was more modest in East Africa. By contrast, Southern and Central Africa showed a rise in inequality. In Northern Africa, inequalities have persisted or worsened.[4]

6. Inequality in Africa remained high owing to the reliance of African economies on the extraction industry, namely, mining and oil, agriculture and the export of primary commodities, which have generated few formal jobs and redistributed economic gains unequally, resulting in a growing informal sector in Africa with rising vulnerable employment.

---

[1] See World Bank, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016: Taking on Inequality* (Washington, D.C., 2016).

[2] See Economic Commission for Africa, *The Demographic Profile of African Countries* (Addis Ababa, 2016).

[3] See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Compacts for Equality: Towards a Sustainable Future* (Santiago, 2014).

[4] Abdesslam Boutayeb and Uwe Helmert, "Social inequalities, regional disparities and health inequity in North African countries", *International Journal for Equity in Health*, vol. 10 (23) (May 2011).

7. Inequality in Africa is a gendered phenomenon. In 2016, women had an unemployment rate of 9.4, compared with 6.9 per cent for men. African women continue to face discrimination in gaining access to economic assets and constraints in participating in economic activities. Substantial disparities in land and asset ownership persist between men and women, with women in some countries having no legal rights to own land and property or conduct business independently.[5]

8. The low involvement of girls in secondary and tertiary education, especially in rural communities, is one of the root causes of gender inequality. Poverty, the high cost of education, early marriages, adolescent pregnancies, the lack of gender-sensitive sanitation facilities, gender-based violence and the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on girls compound this inequality.

9. Access to education and health in Africa remains low overall. More than two in five adults are illiterate and the quality of education is substandard. Progress in health services is being made, but outcomes nevertheless remain the worst in the world. Nearly two in five children are malnourished and progress in immunization rates has waned.

10. While Africa remains predominantly rural, it is also the fastest urbanizing region in the world. There are large geographical differences in poverty and inequality within countries along the urban-rural divide. Urbanization simultaneously represents a challenge and an opportunity for decreasing poverty and inequality in Africa.

11. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has developed the African Social Development Index as a tool to support its member States in tracking progress made towards reducing human exclusion, including poverty. The Index can be used to measure the inclusiveness of growth and, therefore, contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It has also proved to be an innovative tool in aiding member States in taking a comprehensive look at social policy as it relates to human inclusion and poverty reduction.

Latin America and the Caribbean

12. High levels of inequality are a deeply entrenched historical and structural characteristic of Latin American societies. They are also determined heavily by the productive structure, in which 50 per cent of all jobs in the region are in low productivity sectors, owing usually to the constrained use of technologies and/or of low-skilled workers. While the region has succeeded in reducing income inequality over the past decade, thanks to better employment conditions, stronger social protection systems and improved tax systems, this reduction has slowed in recent years.

13. Inequality is affected by cross-cutting factors such as gender, race, ethnicity and disabilities.[6] Poverty levels in 2014 were significantly higher for Afrodescendent and indigenous populations, especially among women. In addition, people with one or more disabilities have fewer economic opportunities.

14. Women who dedicate their time to unpaid domestic work are highly vulnerable to poverty, given that they lack their own income, have less certifiable employment experience and generally lack social security protections. Their poverty is exacerbated in the event of separation or widowhood. Women without economic autonomy are also more likely to suffer gender-based violence.

[5] See Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *FAO Statistical Yearbook 2012: Africa Food and Agriculture* (Rome, 2013).

[6] See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Horizons 2030: equality at the centre of sustainable development" (Santiago, 2016).

15. Territorial considerations are another determining factor of poverty: 23.2 per cent of poor people live in urban areas, compared with 47.9 per cent in rural areas. Furthermore, 7.7 per cent of the urban population faces conditions of extreme poverty, compared with 28.2 per cent of the rural population.[7]

16. Latin America and the Caribbean have made significant progress in expanding the coverage of and access to education. Between 1990 and 2013, the percentage of young people between the ages of 15 and 19 who completed primary education rose from 60.5 percent to 94.4.[7] The region also achieved a two-thirds reduction in child mortality.

17. The Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has been making efforts for more than 30 years to promote the measurement of income poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its methodological recommendations for poverty measurement form the basis of national official poverty in most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Commission also provides countries with strategic advice on poverty reduction.

Arab region

18. In the 1990s, only 9 percent of the population in the Arab region lived under the global poverty line, and the region experienced comparatively low levels of poverty and inequality. Over the past 30 years, income inequalities have been on the rise owing to an uneven distribution of income gains. While poverty decreased in some Arab countries, inequality remained the same or increased. In Tunisia, for example, between 2000 and 2010, poverty rates were reduced from 35 to 10 per cent, while the drop in inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, was nominal (from 0.344 to 0.327).

19. Poverty increased in countries affected by conflict and political instability. In the Syrian Arab Republic, armed conflict resulted in an increase in poverty from 12.3 per cent in 2007 to an estimated 43 per cent in 2013. By 2015, the upper poverty rate increased to 83.4 per cent.[8] In Yemen, poverty increased from a rate of 34 per cent in 2006 to more than 60 per cent in 2015.

20. There are striking subregional disparities in per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the region, with the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf at the top and Comoros, Djibouti, Somalia, Mauritania, the Sudan and Yemen at the bottom.[9] This stark contrast in GDP does not always translate to patterns and dynamics of economic inequality: low income coincides with high inequality in Comoros, Djibouti and Mauritania; medium income with medium inequality in Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic; medium income with high inequality in Morocco;[9] and high income with high inequality in Qatar.

21. Inequalities in wealth and income also underpin social inequalities in healthcare, education, housing and political and social rights. Although remarkable progress has been achieved, gender inequality persists. In conflict and displacement settings, gender inequalities are even more profound, with a heightened impact on vulnerable groups.

---

[7] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, "Inclusive social development: the next generation of policies for overcoming poverty and reducing inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean" (Santiago, 2016), p. 31.

[8] See Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and University of St. Andrews, "Syria at war: five years on" (Beirut, 2015).

[9] See Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, "Perspectives on inequality challenges in the Arab region", Issues brief (Beirut, 2015). Available from http://css.escwa.org.lb/SDPD/3572/Goal10.pdf.

22. The Arab region has experienced a significant reduction in gender gaps in health and educational achievements over the past two decades. Widespread economic and political inequalities between men and women, however, remain. Young people have, on average, employment rates two to four times lower than that of the adult population.[10]

23. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has developed a new multidimensional poverty measurement tool. The tool is applied to all countries in the Arab region to monitor progress on multidimensional poverty. In addition, ESCWA is rolling out two toolkits on social protection and social justice in the region.

Asia and the Pacific

24. In Asia and the Pacific, economic growth has significantly reduced the total number of people living in poverty. In 2013, 400 million people lived below the poverty line, down from 1 billion in 2000. However, economic gains were not shared equally and income inequality remained above the world average.[11] In eight countries, including China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and the Russian Federation, income inequalities have increased.[11]

25. Vulnerable employment, comprised of self-employed workers and those working in low-productivity services, is pervasive across the region, constituting more than 80 per cent of all employment in Bangladesh, India and the Lao People's Democratic Republic.[12]

26. One of the most worrisome trends in the region is the low and even declining level of women's participation in the labour force. Currently, the average gender gap in labour force participation is 30 percentage points, reaching 50 percentage points in South and South-West Asia.

27. The unequal burden of unpaid care work is a critical barrier to achieving gender equality. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, time-use surveys indicated that the share of paid work of total time used was 11.8 per cent for women, compared with 78.3 per cent for men. Similarly, in Pakistan, women spent 21.4 per cent of their time in paid work, compared with the 91.2 per cent share for men. Persons with disabilities also face multidimensional exclusions in the region. As many as 650 million persons with some form of disability live in Asia and the Pacific.

28. Income and wealth inequality are driven and reinforced by gaps in opportunities,[12] namely, unequal access to services, including healthcare, education, employment, water and sanitation, and energy services and/or electricity. For example, in Pakistan, girls in the highest quintile attend school for 7.7 more years than girls in the lowest income quintile. This difference is 5.8 years in Nepal and 5 years in Cambodia and Viet Nam.[12]

29. Sex, ethnicity, religion, caste and residence in urban or rural areas or even the province in which one is born determine the quality of access to services that people have throughout their lives. In India, the prevalence of malnutrition is higher in rural areas and among scheduled tribes and castes.[13] Teenage pregnancy is more

[10] See World Bank, *Inequality, Uprisings, and Conflict in the Arab World* (Washington, D.C., 2015).

[11] See Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "Time for equality: the role of social protection in reducing inequalities in Asia and the Pacific" (Bangkok, 2015) and World Bank, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2016: Taking on Inequality* (Washington, D.C., 2016).

[12] See Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "Time for equality: the role of social protection in reducing inequalities in Asia and the Pacific" (Bangkok, 2015).

[13] See India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) 2005-06* (Mumbai, 2006).

frequent among rural populations. Rural poverty is also strongly associated with indigenous populations.

30. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), in cooperation with ECA, ECLAC and ESCWA, launched an online interactive platform, the Social Protection Toolbox, which highlights good practices in establishing the foundations of a social protection floor. Using multimedia and data visualization techniques, the Toolbox presents policymakers and stakeholders with the argument for strengthening and broadening social protection in a user-friendly and interactive fashion.

Economic Commission for Europe region

31. In the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region, levels of equality vary greatly. The financial and economic crisis of 2008 resulted in increased poverty and inequality across the region, especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, inequality increased as the broad access to social services that the population had enjoyed under socialist systems diminished.[14]

32. In addition, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, low commodity prices and slowing growth in the European Union and the Russian Federation during the past decade have made it difficult for many to find safe and stable employment. As a result, inequality has increased.[14] This situation is especially stark in "pockets of poverty", including isolated rural and mountainous areas and mono-company towns.[15]

33. The ECE region experiences notable territorial inequalities, with the majority of wealth concentrated in urban areas. The economic and financial crisis in the region has resulted in a decrease in the affordability of housing and utilities. Poor owners or those who could not afford to pay for utilities emerged across the region. More than 100 million people in the region today have to spend more than 40 per cent of their disposable income on housing. The social housing waiting lists in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are at 1.8 million, 1.7 million in France and 1.17 million in Ukraine. The United States of America has a shortage of 5.3 million social housing homes.[16]

34. ECE developed a guide on poverty measurement to raise awareness of the importance of poverty statistics, provide guidance to countries in applying various measurement approaches and improve international comparability. The Geneva United Nations Charter on Sustainable Housing was endorsed by ECE to promote access to decent, adequate, affordable and healthy housing for all.

Policy areas to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality

35. The regional commissions implemented a joint United Nations Development Account project[17] for the period 2014-2017 that supports countries in conceptualizing, designing and implementing multidisciplinary public policies oriented towards greater socioeconomic equality. In line with the vision of the 2030 Agenda, the project demonstrated that addressing poverty and inequality requires an

[14] See United Nations Development Programme, *Progress at Risk: Inequalities and Human Development in Eastern Europe, Turkey and Central Asia* (Istanbul, 2016).

[15] See Economic Commission for Europe, "Looking back, leaping forward: moving from MDGs to SDGs in Europe and Central Asia" (Geneva, 2016).

[16] See Economic Commission for Europe, "Social housing in the UNECE region: models, trends and challenges" (Geneva, 2015).

[17] See United Nations Development Account, "Promoting equality: strengthening the capacity of selected developing countries to design and implement equality oriented public policies and programmes", Ninth tranche project document (2014).

integrated vision that takes into account the three dimensions, namely, social, economic and environmental, of sustainable development. While the project has focused on areas of national policy, it is recognized that an enabling international and regional environment and enlisting multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical contributors to the efforts to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality.

Promoting structural change and diversifying economies

36. To overcome poverty and inequality, it is necessary to raise economic productivity through structural change to diversify economies at the national and local levels, promote technological and social innovations, improve infrastructure and enhance business environments.

37. In Africa, where nearly half the workforce is still dependent on agriculture, promoting investments in innovative technologies and approaches has already helped to reduce poverty. The experience of Ethiopia has demonstrated that the application of fertilizers, along with regulating prices of agricultural products, has given poor farmers opportunities to generate higher incomes. Ethiopia has reduced poverty considerably over the past decade, with a reduction of 4 per cent annually.

Establishing effective tax systems

38. Tax systems are an important vehicle for redistributing wealth and reducing inequality. To enhance their capacity to finance social protections, countries need to expand their relatively narrow tax base, including by tackling high labour market informality and weak tax administration and collection.

39. Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka have developed tax-financed social protection programmes for children with specific nutritional, health and educational objectives. Many countries, including Maldives, Nepal, Samoa and Viet Nam, are also providing tax-financed, non-contributory pensions that are aimed at covering all older persons.

Improving labour markets

40. Establishing an effective regulatory framework to support decent jobs, harmonize national labour laws and regulations with international labour standards and monitor and enforce compliance with national labour laws to ensure decent jobs are key steps to overcome inequality.

Strengthening social protection systems

41. The adoption of a social protection floor is a key social protection measure. Social protection measures should be implemented as an integrated social protection system and in tandem with other measures to increase economic productivity and improve education.

42. The political commitment to social development has increased in many countries. Twenty-one countries in the Asia and Pacific region have increased social protection spending as a share of total government expenditure over the past two decades.[12] In Africa, Ethiopia's productive safety net programme, which includes food and/or cash transfers, has supported more than 1.5 million people.

Promoting environmentally sustainable and resilient economic development

43. The combination of poverty and inequality makes the poor more vulnerable than the non-poor to the effects of environmental damage and climate change owing to their enhanced exposure, limited access to resources and diminished coping capacity to address negative impacts. Public institutions and policies must be

coordinated around a big environmental push geared towards transforming the production structure to be economically, socially and environmentally sound.

Promoting access to high-quality education

44. Countries need to improve education completion rates for vulnerable population groups, especially for girls, and increase or leverage public resources to enhance access, affordability and quality of education at various levels.

Promoting gender equality

45. Governments need to actively champion the integration of gender concerns into national planning, including institutional development, and legislative and budgetary processes.

46. Greater investments are needed in time-saving and labour-saving infrastructure, including water supply, electricity and transportation, to alleviate the burden on girls and women from unpaid domestic work and enable their participation in education and remunerative economic activities. Targeted awareness campaigns to effect attitudinal change and encourage women and girls to claim their legal rights need to be organized.

47. In 2005, the Government of Burkina Faso instituted the response to improve girls' chances to succeed programme. The programme increased overall enrolment by 19 per cent and increased girls' enrolment by almost 5 per cent more than that of boys.[18]

48. Fostering female entrepreneurship is a key strategy to facilitate women's economic empowerment. Doing so requires Governments to support an increase in women's access to financial services, markets and information and communication technology (ICT).

Promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities

49. Countries need to harmonize national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure enforceable anti-discrimination provisions and stronger social protection schemes to support persons with disabilities.

Decreasing territorial inequalities

50. Policies and strategies for poverty eradication need to harness the potential of urbanization to drive inclusive growth, while effectively managing related externalities. There is a need to promote territorial cohesion through more effective vertical and horizontal coordination of various branches of Governments. Territorial consideration should be included in national strategies for poverty reduction.

Mainstreaming poverty reduction measures into national development plans

51. Fiscal and sectoral policies need to be aligned towards toward poverty eradication through mainstreaming poverty and inequality reduction measures into national development plans.

[18] Harounan Kazianga, Dan Levy, Leigh L. Linden and Matt Sloan, "The effects of 'girl-friendly' schools: evidence from the BRIGHT school construction program in Burkina Faso", *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, vol. 5 (2), pp. 41-62.

Raising capacity of Governments in data collection on poverty and inequality

52. Household-level data on income, as well as access to education, health, employment, financial services, ICT, water and sanitation and electricity, are scarce worldwide, especially in developing countries. An analysis of inequality across population groups is therefore incomplete. There is a need to develop the skills of policymakers at the national and local levels for collecting, aggregating, analysing and presenting information on key socioeconomic indicators. Civil society should also be empowered to participate in data-collection efforts. New data-collection tools, which use new media technologies, should be integrated into national data-collection processes.

53. To overcome the paucity of sex-disaggregated data and data on persons with disabilities, a concerted effort is required from Governments, including critical actors such as national statistical offices and ministries of finance, to devote sufficient human and financial resources to the development of solid statistical capacities.

B. Regional perspectives on migration

54. While international migration is a global phenomenon, migration has strong intraregional dimensions, with most movements limited to the same region. This trend towards intraregional migration is frequently driven by labour policies and practices. Factors such as shared histories, linguistic and cultural similarities, uneven development between neighbouring countries, preferential legal migration options and ease of travel often lead to migrants moving to countries near their own. There is significant regional diversity in terms of the relevant roles and impacts on the regions as places of origin, transit and destination for migrants.

55. Following the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in September 2016 and with the inception of a multi-stakeholder consultative process towards forging a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration, culminating in an intergovernmental conference in 2018, the present report highlights key regional, subregional and intraregional migration trends in support of the knowledge base for the global compact on migration process and ahead of the planned regional consultations.

Identifying regional and intraregional migration trends

56. A comparative analysis of statistics from across the five regions covered by the regional commissions illustrates the strong tendency towards regional and intraregional migration. In Africa, 52 per cent of migrants from African countries migrated to other African countries, with most of this migration occurring between neighbouring countries. For example, 70 per cent of West African migrants moved to other West African countries. In Asia and the Pacific, 75 per cent of migrants come from other countries within the region. In Latin America and the Caribbean, that figure is almost two thirds.

57. In the Arab region, labour and forced migration trends coalesce to ensure that most migrants from Arab countries remain within the region, either immigrating to the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf as migrant workers or being forced to move to neighbouring countries as a result of conflict. With regard to Europe, while the region faces very different labour migration conditions, the freedom of movement within the European Union for citizens of its member States means that most European migrants similarly remain within Europe.

Economic Commission for Europe region

58. The ECE region has experienced increased displacement and migration dynamics, with important implications in terms of sustainable development. It is a region of origin, transit and destination that hosts sizable refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant populations. Both 2015 and early 2016 were characterized by continuing large-scale arrivals across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe, driven in large measure by conflicts in the Middle East and other regions. Irregular movement is a longstanding challenge, with human trafficking, smuggling exploitation and abuse becoming more frequent phenomena in the region.

59. However, socioeconomic forces are among the key drivers of migration, causing increasing levels of migration of young people. According to the World Bank, three of the seven countries receiving the largest amount of remittance inflows, relative to GDP, in the world in 2015 were in the region, namely, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan.

Latin America and the Caribbean

60. Current migratory patterns in Latin America and the Caribbean reflect both recent change and long-term continuity. Some 30 million natives of the region live outside their country of birth. The foreign-born population residing in Latin American and Caribbean countries accounts for approximately one quarter of the number of emigrants and only 1.1 per cent of the total population of the region. Immigrants coming from the region of Latin America and the Caribbean account for 62.8 per cent. Emigration, however, varies markedly by subregion, with the Caribbean and Central America standing out owing to the high proportion of emigrants in relation to the volume of the native population (11.1 per cent and 10.2 per cent, respectively). Mexico represents 40 per cent of the regional emigration, with some 12 million of its citizens living abroad. It is followed by Colombia and El Salvador. The main recipients in absolute numbers are Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil and Mexico.

61. Regional migration to the United States continues to comprise the bulk of emigration. Although flows from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States have declined recently, the long-term trend shows that it still amounts to more than 20 million people. After the United States, Spain is the second most important non-regional destination, bringing together 8 per cent of the region's total emigrants in 2010 (2.4 million people).

Arab region

62. International migration in the Arab region is a growing phenomenon. In 2015, there were almost 35 million migrants in 22 Arab countries. The number of international migrants as a share of the total population of the region is increasing (8.9 per cent in 2015, compared with 6.5 per cent in 1990), making international migration one of the main factors driving economic and social change. It is estimated that there were more than 26 million migrants from the Arab region in 2015.[19]

63. Migration takes three primary forms: regular and irregular labour migration, forced migration and mixed migration flows. The Gulf countries are the primary destination for migrant labour from both within and beyond the region. In 2015, the six countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf alone hosted more than 25 million migrants, most of whom were labour migrants. Forced

[19] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Trends in international migrant stock: the 2015 revision" (New York, 2015).

migration to, from and through the Arab region is largely the result of people fleeing conflict, wars, severe breakdowns in the public order, generalized violence or persecution. The Arab region also bears witness to large-scale, cross-border and irregular mixed flows of migrants. Displacement is affecting more than 30 million people, resulting in more than 18 million internally displaced persons, more than 5 million Palestinian refugees and more than 7 million refugees.[20]

Asia and the Pacific

64. The majority of migrants to and from countries of Asia and the Pacific are temporary labour migrants participating in low-skilled labour. There are more than 98 million migrants from ESCAP member States, with the largest numbers coming from Bangladesh, China, India and the Russian Federation. Overall, 46 per cent of migrants from ESCAP member States are women, although this obfuscates significant subregional differences: migrants from Central, East, North and North-East Asia and from the Pacific are predominantly women, while those from South and South-West Asia are overwhelmingly men.

65. Of the more than 60 million migrants in the ESCAP region, nearly 45 million migrate from other countries within the region. Major countries of destination for intraregional migrants include India, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and Thailand. Further analysis shows that most migration movements take place within the same subregion. For example, 97 per cent of migrants from ESCAP member States in Central and North Asia are from other countries in the subregion, whereas the figure for South and South-West Asia is 91 per cent.

66. These trends reflect factors such as historical and cultural linkages and, in some cases, favourable legal regimes for citizens of neighbouring countries. They also reflect differences between countries in the same subregion in demographic and development trends that drive labour migration. For example, in South-East Asia, countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand represent highly desirable migration destinations for people from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar owing to their relatively high levels of development and rapid ageing.

67. Forced migration is also an important factor in the context of intraregional migration. Almost 4 million of the 4.8 million Afghan citizens abroad reside in the neighbouring countries of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, reflecting the important role of neighbouring countries as countries of asylum.

Africa

68. Some 31 million Africans, or a little more than 3 per cent of the continent's population, have migrated, including both voluntary and involuntary migrants. Of these, nearly 28 per cent have come from North Africa.

69. Migration flows within Africa are much larger than those out of Africa, with more than half of migrants staying within the continent. Excluding North Africa, some two thirds of migrants, especially poor migrants, go to other countries within Africa, with the bulk of migrants remaining within their subregions. Of those emigrating, more than 70 per cent in West Africa, 65 per cent in Southern Africa, 50 per cent in Central Africa and 47 per cent in East Africa migrate within the subregion.

[20] See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Global trends: forced displacement in 2015" (Geneva, 2016) and International Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Annual report 2015" (Geneva, 2015).

70. Only in North Africa do 90 per cent of emigrants go to destinations outside of Africa, predominantly to Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Only about 28 per cent of migrants from Africa go to Europe. Of the total migrants residing in Europe, less than 12 per cent are from Africa.

Tapping into regional cooperation to address migration-related challenges

71. At regional and frequently subregional levels, there are many existing processes and mechanisms that are already quite advanced and that will be leveraged to facilitate cooperation and knowledge-sharing with regard to the global compact on migration. Informal regional dialogues, such as the Colombo Process in Asia or the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration, serves to build confidence, networks and shared understanding and facilitate practical cooperation. More formal processes, such as the Mercosur agreement on free movement and residence and the treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union, establish forms of free movement of migrants between the member States of their memberships, giving greater options for legal and safe migration, and serving to bring member States of these organizations closer together.

72. Within Latin America and the Caribbean, the primary engagement of ECLAC on migration focuses on the monitoring and implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. Approved in 2013 by the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, a regional body for which ECLAC serves as the technical secretariat, it contains one chapter that concerns international migration and the protection of the human rights of all migrants. Countries within the region are working to support the development of a rights-based institutional framework, legislation and public policies to address the lack of protection for many migrants in their crossings, insertion and return. Through leveraging the 2030 Agenda and the establishment of the Forum the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, the Montevideo Consensus and the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean are in the midst of having actions and indicators defined. It is expected that the Forum on Sustainable Development will explicitly associate the Montevideo Consensus and the Sustainable Development Goals.

73. ESCWA, together with the League of Arab States and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), serves as Co-Chair of a working group on international migration in the Arab region that brings together 16 participating United Nations agencies. This forum strengthens regional coordination on migration issues and the implementation of the migration-related Sustainable Development Goals and will be leveraged to support preparations for the regional consultative process for the global compact on migration. Under the aegis of the working group, it was emphasized in the 2015 situation report on international migration that there was a need for peace, stability and the rule of law, finding immediate political solutions to ongoing conflicts that have resulted in large movements of refugees and addressing the root causes of these conflicts, such as poverty.

74. The Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration, facilitated by the League of Arab States, is a key intergovernmental platform for addressing migration and displacement issues at the regional level. It promotes the principle of international solidarity with host countries and the importance of joint efforts across the international community to deal with large movements of refugees and increasing irregular migration. In doing so, it focuses on protecting the security and stability of its member States, while also defending the human dignity of refugees and migrants.

75. The most formal means of fostering cooperation on international migration in Asia and the Pacific takes place through regional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Eurasian Economic Union, which are working to address labour mobility issues and labour market integration within the region. Member States in the region are also addressing migration challenges through regional consultative processes on migration, such as the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, which, among other things, addresses reducing migrant exploitation by expanding safe, legal and affordable migration pathways; the Colombo Process, which brings together countries of origin of labour migrants from South and South-East Asia to promote dialogue; and the Abu Dhabi dialogue, which promotes discussions between Colombo Process countries and the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. Such processes facilitate dialogue and practical cooperation on areas of shared interest between countries of origin, destination and transit in the region.

76. ESCAP supports its member States in these formal processes and also convenes meetings to provide an intergovernmental forum for regional dialogue and consensus, building on international migration, such as the Asia-Pacific regional preparatory meeting for the Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2010; the Asia-Pacific regional preparatory meeting for the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2013; and the Asia-Pacific population conferences. Moreover, ESCAP leverages its role as convenor of the Regional Coordination Mechanism to enlist the expertise of partner agencies, notably IOM, to support member States on migration issues and produce collaborative knowledge products.

77. Among the knowledge products that will support the knowledge base for the global compact on migration, in the "Asia-Pacific migration report 2015: migrants' contributions to development", the positive development impacts of international migration and the need to protect migrant workers to ensure positive development outcomes were highlighted. The Pacific Climate Change Migration Project also supported the evidence base on the impacts of climate change on migration in this region and identified concrete policy options.

78. Within the Africa region, the comprehensive programme on migration of ECA seeks to identify relevant policies, practices and tools to assist its member States in the implementation and measurement of the migration-related Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union migration policy framework. In addition, the Joint Labour Migration Programme, an existing partnership of ECA, the African Union Commission, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and IOM, is aimed at addressing the challenges of labour migration and mobility through achieving wider formulation, adoption and implementation of harmonized free movement regimes and coherent national labour migration policies.

79. Two African Union-driven processes are also tackling migration. The high-level panel on migration, chaired by the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, was constituted pursuant to a resolution passed at the Joint Annual Meetings of the ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance in Addis Ababa in March and April 2016. In the resolution, it was mandated that ECA and the African Union Commission provide the technical backstopping necessary to the panel. Separately, and stemming from recognition of the central role of migration as an important enabler for inclusive and sustainable development premised on African-owned and African-driven initiatives, the theme of the 2017 Africa Development Forum is "Migration and Africa's transformation". The Forum will offer unique opportunities

to meet and interact with key players in the field of migration, with the participation of heads of State, government ministers, eminent speakers and policy experts.

80. In the ECE region, the Budapest Process has evolved over the past 20 years from an information-sharing tool between European countries in a pre-European Union enlargement setting to a far-reaching European-Asian forum for improving migration management, with the participation of more than 50 Governments and numerous international organizations. While supporting the European Union's global approach to migration and mobility, the Prague Process, which was established in 2009, is aimed at strengthening cooperation in migration management, specifically exploring and developing agreed-upon principles and elements for close migration partnerships between the 50 participating countries. It focuses on issues relating to asylum, legal migration, irregular migration and migration and development. The Almaty Process, which was established in 2013, is aimed at addressing the challenges resulting from complex migration dynamics and mixed migratory movements in Central Asia and the wider region through promoting sustained dialogue and exchange of information on migration issues and on refugee protection challenges. In addition, there are a number of interregional forums on migration, linking Europe and other regions.

81. ECE is working with its member States to devise innovative ways to measure and monitor migratory flows, develop common definitions and explore the use of administrative data and non-traditional data sources for migration statistics. The Commission's steering group on migration statistics provides direction to the work of the Conference of European Statisticians on migration statistics, advances methodological development in migration statistics and provides a mechanism for following up on the implementation of methodological guidance on migration statistics. A number of these statistical workstreams on migration under way could support the knowledge base for the global compact.

Regional consultations in support of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration

82. In its resolution 71/280 on the modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, the General Assembly requested the regional economic commissions, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, in particular IOM, to organize discussions among States Members of the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders to examine regional and subregional aspects of international migration.

83. Accordingly, the regional commissions have proceeded to plan their relevant regional consultations and support knowledge products, which will provide regional and subregional perspectives on the six identified themes, as relevant and applicable within each region, for integration into the preparatory process of the global compact ahead of the global stock-taking meeting, to be held in Mexico in 2017. The regional commissions are cooperating closely to share best practices and lessons learned that emerge from the planning of their regional consultations and cooperating substantively on issues requiring interregional collaboration.

84. In implementing these activities, the regional commissions are working closely with IOM and other United Nations partners on the ground and are leveraging existing structures, such as the Regional Coordination Mechanism thematic working groups, and partnerships with regional entities such as the African Union Commission and the League of Arab States. In order to reflect the subregional diversity within the regions, the regional commissions are spearheading a number of knowledge products that will feed into the regional consultations. From these

regional consultations, the regional commissions will produce summary reports of the Chairs, which will be considered as input to the global stock-taking meeting.

85. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, ECLAC plans to organize its regional consultation in Santiago on 30 and 31 August 2017, at which it will present and consider the findings of three studies commissioned on the subregional perspectives on migration in South America, Central America and Mexico and the Caribbean.

86. ESCWA aims to conduct its regional consultation in late September 2017 in collaboration with IOM, the League of Arab States and other United Nations partners. ESCWA will lead preparations of a thematic study on the policy implications of the global compact for countries of the region, focusing on national policy gaps that require alignment with international standards. The consultation will coincide with the publication of the 2017 situation report on international migration, which will constitute a key substantive input to the regional consultative process. A number of preparatory meetings will be held in the lead-up to the consultation, including an extraordinary meeting on the compacts of the Arab Regional Consultative Process and an expert group meeting organized by ILO.

87. In close cooperation with IOM and other United Nations partners, ESCAP will convene a regional consultation for its member States in Bangkok from 6 to 8 November 2017. Given the exigencies faced in the region, the focus of the meeting will be on issues relating to labour migration, climate change and migration and protection in the context of large movements of vulnerable irregular migrants. Background papers on these topics are being prepared to inform deliberations during the meeting.

88. In the Africa region, ECA has formed a migration steering committee, comprised of representatives of ECA, the African Union Commission, IOM, ILO and other relevant stakeholders, to support workplan preparations for its multipronged regional consultative process. To begin the process, an intergovernmental African regional preparatory meeting on the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration was held in Kampala from 15 to 17 May 2017 with 54 member States, as part of the third Pan-African Forum on Migration organized by IOM.

89. ECA will convene an expert group meeting, comprising experts from all subregions, in Addis Ababa in mid-September 2017 to discuss the consolidated regional report. Following from this meeting and in partnership with the African Union Commission, ECA will organize a regional conference to consider the regional report in Addis Ababa from 18 to 20 October. A final session, to be held in tandem with the African Development Forum in November, will be devoted to the outcome document for the global compact on migration.

II. Developments in selected areas of regional and interregional cooperation

A. Major policy issues addressed by the regional commissions at their ministerial sessions and other high-level meetings

90. Regional commissions support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, including its follow-up and review process, and provide regional input to the high-level political forum. Regional forums for sustainable development, convened by the regional commissions, provide input to the high-level political forum and support implementation, peer learning on and review of the

2030 Agenda. In doing so, they provide a natural nexus between the national and global levels. The regional forums are broadly established around five blocks:

(a) Peer learning through exchange of experiences among countries of the same region, notably those preparing for the high-level political forum voluntary national reviews;

(b) Regional progress assessments of the 2030 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Regional perspectives on the global theme of the high-level political forum;

(d) Addressing means of implementation from a cross-cutting regional perspective;

(e) Partnerships within the United Nations system or with regional and subregional organizations or other stakeholders.

91. Ahead of the high-level political forum in July 2017, the regional commissions convened their relevant regional forum for sustainable development. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development was held in Bangkok from 29 to 31 March 2017; the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was held in Mexico City from 26 to 28 April 2017; the Arab Regional Forum for Sustainable Development was held in Rabat from 3 to 5 May 2017; the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the ECE Region was held in Geneva on 25 April 2017; and the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development was held in Addis Ababa from 17 to 19 May 2017. The knowledge products prepared for the forums, including the regional assessment reports of the 2030 Agenda and their outcomes, can be accessed at www.regionalcommissions.org.

92. ECE marked its seventieth anniversary in 2017. The sixty-seventh session of the Commission, entitled "ECE at 70: economic integration and cooperation towards 2030", was held on 26 and 27 April. At the session, the regional forum for sustainable development for the UNECE region was established, engagement by ECE with the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management was requested, the decision of the Inland Transport Committee to explore the possibility of establishing a road safety fund was welcomed and the question of mandating the Committee to report on an annual basis to both the Commission and, for information purposes, to the Economic and Social Council was considered favourably.

93. The seventy-third session of ESCAP was held in Bangkok from 15 to 19 May 2017. The session included a ministerial segment focused on the theme of regional cooperation for sustainable energy in Asia and the Pacific. The study that guided the deliberations contained a review of the challenges and barriers posed by energy for sustainable development in the region. Policy options, means of implementation and different strategies available for countries to transform their energy systems were examined. National actions and policy recommendations that could be enhanced by regional energy cooperation were identified.

B. Promoting coherence at the regional level through the Regional Coordination Mechanisms

94. As mandated by Economic and Social Council and convened by the regional commissions, the Regional Coordination Mechanisms continue to foster and enhance interagency coordination and collaboration.[21]

95. The Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa has evolved into an instrument for coordinating United Nations system support to Africa, including on the 10-year capacity-building programme, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and its successor programme, and the United Nations-African Union partnership on Africa's integration and development agenda for 2017-2027. Its 2017 meeting was held in Dakar on 26 March. It also hosted the first joint meeting between the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa and the regional United Nations Development Group. The meeting saw deliberations on Africa's challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and the support of the United Nations system for the alignment and implementation of both agendas.

96. In 2016, the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism held 12 formal, informal and working-level meetings. Discussions focused on the realignment of the structure of the Mechanism to better address the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the formulation of the ASEAN-United Nations Plan of Action for 2016-2020.

97. The Latin America and Caribbean Regional Coordination Mechanism convened its 2016 meeting in Panama City to coordinate with the United Nations Development Group in Latin America and the Caribbean regarding its contribution to the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. That meeting resulted in the substantive contributions of many United Nations entities to the first regional progress report of ECLAC on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda presented during the first session of the regional forum for sustainable development.

98. The ESCWA Regional Coordination Mechanism convened its annual meeting in December 2016 at the margins of the twenty-ninth ministerial session on the theme of implementing the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region. The group agreed on a set of collaborative initiatives clustered in four key areas, namely, research, regional consultations, capacity-building and advocacy. A new working group of the Mechanism on the 2030 Agenda was established to support the organization of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development. The working group also undertook an internal mapping exercise during the reporting period to identify the key regional activities of its members regarding the 2030 Agenda. A working group on Sustainable Development Goal data co-chaired by ESCWA and the United Nations Population Fund was established and an action plan on Goal data collection was produced.

99. The Europe and Central Asia Regional Coordination Mechanism and the regional United Nations Development Group have further strengthened their cooperation in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They have merged their meetings into biannual regional United Nations system meetings. Issue-based coalitions have been set up to address key sustainable development issues in the region, namely, health, social protection, gender, large movements of people, displacement and resilience.

[21] See Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46.

C. Enhanced interregional cooperation among the regional commissions

100. Since the previous report, the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions have met five times: in New York on 22 July at the margins of the high-level political forum; in New York on 19 September 2016 at the margins of the high-level general debate; in Quito on 18 October 2016 at the margins of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III); on 13 January 2017 through videoconference; and in New York on 22 and 23 February 2017 during a retreat of the Executive Secretaries. Those meetings resulted in coordinated positions and contributions by the regional commissions to regional responses in support of the 2030 Agenda, the Habitat III agenda and climate change challenges in the regions.

101. The reporting period was marked by the organization of a number of joint high-level events, including a side event on regionalism and the 2030 Agenda organized at the margins of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly in September 2016, with participation of heads of State and Government and a joint event on regional implementation of the New Urban Agenda in October 2016 at the margins of Habitat III. The annual dialogue of the Executive Secretaries with the Second Committee at the seventy-first session was held in October 2016 and presented an analysis of the regions' "preparedness" for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

102. Regional commissions also actively participated in the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, at the margins of which a joint side event was organized on the "Economics of climate change: regional perspectives". They will organize the joint eighth international forum and energy ministerial meeting in Astana in June 2017.

United Nations E/2017/15/Add.

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
16 May 2017

Original: English

2017 session
28 July 2016-27 July 2017
Agenda item 15
Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and Economic Commission for Europe

Summary

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields contains information on resolutions and decisions adopted or endorsed at the twenty-ninth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, held in Doha from 13 to 15 December 2016, the thirty-second session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in New York on 30 January 2017, and the sixty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Europe, held in Geneva on 26 and 27 April 2017. The full texts of the resolutions and decisions are available at www.regionalcommissions.org/our-work/regional-commissions-sessions-resolutions-and-decisions.

17-07832 (E) 230517

Please recycle

Contents

		Page
I.	Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council	3
	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	3
II.	Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council	4
	A. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	4
	B. Economic Commission for Europe	9

I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

1. At its thirty-second session, held in New York on 30 January 2017, the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean adopted resolution 716 (PLEN.32), on the basis of which the following draft resolution is submitted for action by the Economic and Social Council:

Draft resolution
Admission of Turkey as a member State of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Economic and Social Council,

Noting resolution 716 (PLEN.32) of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean at its thirty-second session (see annex),

Approves the admission of Turkey as a member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Annex

Resolution 716 (PLEN.32)

Admission of Turkey as a member State of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

The Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Bearing in mind that the Commission was established by the Economic and Social Council by its resolution 106 (VI) of 25 February 1948, in which the Council stated that membership of the Commission shall be open to States Members of the United Nations in Northern, Central and South America and in the Caribbean area and to France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,

Bearing in mind also that the Commission was established on the basis of the participation of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, plus those that have had special relations of a historical, cultural, geographical or economic nature with the region,

Recalling that, in that spirit, the Commission subsequently admitted the following countries: Spain in 1979, Portugal in 1984, Italy in 1990, Germany in 2005, Japan in 2006, the Republic of Korea in 2007 and Norway in 2015,

Considering that the Government of Turkey has communicated to the Commission, through the Executive Secretary, its desire to be admitted as a member of the Commission,[1]

1. *Welcomes* the request from the Government of Turkey that the country be admitted as a member of the Commission;

2. *Recommends* to the Economic and Social Council that it approve the admission of Turkey as a member of the Commission and authorize to this effect the

[1] LC/L.4259(PLEN.32/4).

amendment of paragraph 3(a) of the terms of reference of the Commission to include the name of Turkey after that of the Republic of Korea.

II. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

A. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

2. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-ninth session in Doha from 13 to 15 December 2016. The session, which concluded with the adoption of the Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted a number of resolutions relating to the programme of work of ESCWA, a summary of which is set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Summary of the Doha Declaration on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

3. The representatives of the member States of ESCWA, assembled in Doha at the twenty-ninth session of the Commission, held from 13 to 15 December 2016, reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. They recalled ESCWA resolution 322 of 16 December 2015 on the ESCWA plan of action to support member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially incorporating the Agenda's Goals in national development plans, and agreed on the need to support least developed countries and to assist them in achieving a qualitative development shift, and to support war-torn and conflict-affected countries. They supported efforts to achieve gender equality and empower women, in line with countries' domestic systems and legislation and would strive to strengthen the role of women in all areas, and considered this objective a regional priority.

5. They appreciated the constructive role undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat in supporting the participation of Arab countries in the preparatory process for developing the 2030 Agenda and requested the secretariat to continue supporting the implementation process in line with the strategies approved by member States, which it developed for that purpose. In that context, the Member States requested the secretariat to focus on the following:

(a) Continue to produce informative material on the implementation of the Agenda at the national level and to focus on local development requirements in rural and urban areas;

(b) Prepare a concept paper on establishing an Arab forum for financing sustainable development in the region, which complements the role of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development;

(c) Prepare working papers on the interlinkages between the Agenda's economic, social, environmental, political/institutional and cultural dimensions and its 17 goals, and on the role of the various actors in its implementation, including Governments, civil society and the private sector;

(d) Develop approaches that facilitate incorporating and adapting the Agenda and its Goals and targets nationally and regionally, including an approach to identify sets of interlinked goals drawn from national priorities, so as to ensure effectiveness

and efficiency; and implement programmes to build national capacity and transfer knowledge to benefit from regional and international initiatives;

(e) Prepare training material and programmes and the necessary guides to develop national capacity and assist decision makers and development partners in the implementation process, including parliamentarians and civil society organizations;

(f) Continue to develop analysis tools that assist in determining interlinkages between goals, in accordance with country specificities and national plans, including network analysis, modelling and forecasting, and work with member States to build capacity in this field;

(g) Build national capacity to prepare reports on progress achieved in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and disseminate existing approaches to drafting such reports;

(h) Assist Arab countries in developing appropriate institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms between entities in national statistical offices, so as to improve efficiency in monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets;

(i) Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the availability of good quality statistics for use in preparing indicators to measure progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in collaboration and coordination with the secretariat of the Arab Working Group on Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators and national statistical offices;

(j) Identify a narrow set of indicators, based on national and regional priorities, while taking into account the capacity of Arab countries to provide the necessary indicators in line with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and international standards, so as to periodically monitor the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Resolutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Resolution 323 (XXIX) Adoption of the strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019

6. The Commission endorsed the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019 and noted comments by member States for inclusion in the programme of work for the biennium 2018-2019.

Resolution 324 (XXIX) Adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

7. The Commission adopted the recommendations set out in the reports of its subsidiary bodies and requested the Executive Secretary to continue following up on their implementation.

8. It invited member States to put into place the necessary measures to ensure the implementation of the recommendations set out in those reports.

Resolution 325 (XXIX) Adoption of the proposed amendments to the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017

9. The Commission adopted the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the period 2016-2017.

10. It requested the secretariat to follow up on the implementation of the programme of work and include therein the necessary activities to address any challenges that may emerge in the Arab region.

Resolution 326 (XXIX) Justice for the Palestinian people: 50 years of Israeli occupation

11. The Commission welcomed the accession of the State of Palestine to international treaties, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols, and supported efforts for Palestine to accede to all related treaties.

12. It called upon member States to: (a) increase official activities supporting the Palestinian people within member States and through diplomatic missions; and (b) strive to include an item on the Palestinian cause and the rights of the Palestinian people in general in as many regional and international events and conferences as possible.

13. The Commission requested the secretariat to continue supporting the Palestinian people and its institutions through the following:

(a) Increase activities on Palestine and organize special activities so as to raise awareness of the Palestinian people's rights and of Israeli violations of international law, provide support to the Government of Palestine in implementing the National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 and support Palestinian endeavours to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) Build partnerships with international, regional and national bodies, and strengthen research and technical activities aimed at supporting Palestinian refugees;

(c) Coordinate and collaborate with relevant Palestinian entities to develop an ESCWA media and communications strategy aimed at increasing global awareness of the Palestinian cause;

(d) Continue to monitor and evaluate the repercussions of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people and for the economic and social development of current and future generations;

(e) Strengthen efforts to calculate the impact of the Israeli occupation and, in this context, build partnerships with all relevant actors;

(f) Strive to establish a specialized unit on issues related to Palestine and its people, and continue supporting the Palestinian people to realize all its rights guaranteed by United Nations resolutions and international treaties and charters.

Resolution 327 (XXIX) Working mechanisms of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

14. The Commission affirmed the important role of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development as a regional platform where stakeholders can address sustainable development issues from an integrated perspective, consider formulations, frameworks and follow-up and review mechanisms for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and contribute to building a unified position on the opportunities and challenges of achieving sustainable development in the Arab region.

15. It invited presentations of national and regional experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including voluntary national reports on progress in this regard, at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development to exchange expertise, experiences and lessons learned.

16. The Commission endorsed the annexed terms of reference, which organize the working mechanisms of the Forum in a manner that guarantees its effectiveness and success in strengthening regional cooperation and coordination to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Annex

Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

Terms of reference

Aim of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development aims to stimulate and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to establish follow-up and review frameworks and mechanisms in the Arab region as follows:

- Provide a platform to discuss transnational issues from a perspective that takes into account integration between sectors and that targets government and non-government organizations, including civil society organizations, the private sector, parliaments and think tanks
- Encourage Arab countries to translate their commitments to the principles and Goals of the 2030 Agenda into integrated strategies, programmes and policies that promote positive interactions between Goals and targets
- Determine common regional goals and emerging challenges, and promote consistency between national development plans and strategies and regional priorities
- Strengthen regional and international cooperation to implement, follow up and review the 2030 Agenda, including cooperation between Arab countries and trilateral cooperation, and identify methods to finance development and build strong partnerships between countries and across regions based on peer learning and the exchange of expertise and best practices
- Assist in mobilizing the necessary implementation methods to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, including the development of statistical systems, science, research, technology and innovation
- Encourage Arab States to conduct voluntary national reviews in line with guidelines set out in the 2030 Agenda, and submit them to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
- Establish a network of practitioners to prepare voluntary national reviews aimed at assisting member States to exchange expertise and lessons learned and to strengthen their capacity to prepare reports and related documents

Venue of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Arab Forum is held at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Beirut. Any Arab State can submit a request to host the Forum to the secretariat for approval subject to the facilities and technical and financial support the hosting State can provide to facilitate the Forum's work and organization.

Date and frequency of the sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum is convened annually (or according to necessity) at least three to four months prior to the holding of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, so as to allow sufficient time for the preparation of the report. The Arab Forum is held concurrently with other regional forums organized by the United Nations regional commissions.

Secretariat of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

ESCWA fulfils the role of the Forum's secretariat. The Forum is organized by a joint committee comprising ESCWA, the League of Arab States and United Nations regional coordination mechanisms.

Participants at the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum is attended by representatives of Arab Governments and governmental and non-governmental regional organizations, civil society, academic institutions, the private sector, parliaments and related financial institutions, including regional development banks, so as to ensure partnerships, integrated roles, interaction and cooperation between sustainable development stakeholders in the Arab region.

Agenda of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The secretariat determines the Forum's agenda based on proposals by the joint committee. Agenda items are consistent with development priorities in Arab countries and with issues under consideration by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The agenda may also contain items on initial presentations of voluntary national reports, before submission to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Input of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum provides an opportunity to discuss several regional and national reports and scientific papers on development in the Arab region and on progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, in line with agreed goals and targets. The Forum also provides the opportunity to review the outcomes of various regional meetings on the 2030 Agenda and its Goals and targets. The Forum's agenda may contain presentations on the key outcomes of the following:

(a) Arab ministerial councils and ESCWA subcommittees concerned with development, including those specializing in specific Goals of the 2030 Agenda;

(b) Regional conferences on the 2030 Agenda, especially those organized under the regional coordination mechanism;

(c) Regional events on various related issues, such as financing development, technology and statistics, and events that highlight the operationalization of partnerships with parliaments, civil society organizations, the private sector and universities.

Outcomes of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Forum issues a summary report, submitted to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as part of regional contributions to the follow-up on the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. Its outcomes are also presented to the ESCWA ministerial session and its Executive Committee and to the

Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States and related Arab ministerial councils.

Resolution 328 (XXIX) Technical cooperation to meet the needs and priorities of member States

17. The Commission commended the efforts of the secretariat in linking its technical cooperation work with its other core functions of research and analysis and consensus-building to support policy formulation.

18. It urged the secretariat to continue strengthening strategic partnerships between United Nations technical cooperation programmes and member States and to promote inclusive South-South cooperation.

19. The Commission requested the secretariat to adopt a programmatic approach based on specific plans for long-term technical cooperation between ESCWA and member States, and to enhance accountability.

B. Economic Commission for Europe

20. At its sixty-seventh session, held in Geneva on 26 and 27 April 2017, the Economic Commission for Europe adopted a number of decisions, summaries of which are set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Decisions of the Economic Commission for Europe

Decision A (67) Adoption of the High-level statement

21. The Economic Commission for Europe adopted a High-level statement (E/ECE/1483), in which the Commission underlined that the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) provides a unique opportunity to celebrate the achievements created through regional cooperation among its member States under changing circumstances. It is also an occasion to reflect on the challenges ahead and how these can be addressed, building on what has already been accomplished.

22. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the UNECE region will require a strong focus on issues such as poverty reduction, inclusive and sustained economic growth, productive employment and environmental protection, which are inherently interlinked and require an integrated response. Gender equality and the empowerment of women also need to be considered across all sectors and areas of activity. UNECE can facilitate effective solutions by strengthening cross-sectoral work across its programmes.

23. UNECE, as 70 years ago, constitutes one of the key working pan-European platforms to promote economic cooperation in the region. It is vital to strengthen discussions that already take place within UNECE on finding additional synergies, removing barriers and laying the foundations for greater economic integration in the UNECE region.

Decision B (67) Establishment of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

24. The Commission decided to establish the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region, which would serve as a regional mechanism to follow-up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to convene it annually in Geneva in 2018 and 2019, in close cooperation with the entities of the regional United Nations system.

25. The Commission requested the secretariat to develop the agenda of each Regional Forum in close consultation with member States and to align it with the respective themes and programme of work of the High-level Political Forum, with a focus on those aspects that are particularly relevant to the UNECE region, and to submit the outcome of the Regional Forum, in the form of a summary produced by its Chair, to the High-level Political Forum, as part of the regional contributions to the global follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Decision C (67) Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management

26. The Commission decided to engage with the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM:Europe), to gain a better understanding of how geospatial information can complement and support existing UNECE activities, particularly in the area of reviewing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, and to present a detailed proposal for collaboration between the two bodies.

Decision D (67) Road Safety Fund

27. The Commission welcomed the decision of the Inland Transport Committee to look into the possibility of establishing a Road Safety Fund through multi-stakeholder and intergovernmental expert consultations, with a view to developing a concrete proposal for the consideration of the Secretary-General in due course, and encouraged member States to become involved in this process.

Decision E (67) Decision 1 on the Ministerial Resolution adopted at the seventy-ninth session of the Inland Transport Committee

28. The Commission took note of the report of the Inland Transport Committee at its seventy-ninth annual session and welcomed the ministerial resolution on "Embracing the new era for sustainable inland transport and mobility" (ECE/TRANS/2017/2). The Commission considered favourably the question of mandating the Committee to report on an annual basis to both the Commission and, for information purposes, to the Economic and Social Council. To this end, the Commission decided to transmit to the Economic and Social Council a draft resolution for its consideration and, possibly, adoption (see annex).

Annex

The Economic and Social Council,

Considering that, under the guidance of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Inland Transport Committee can contribute substantively to the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Acknowledging the importance of harmonized global regulatory governance in inland transport and the need to promote and facilitate universal geographical coverage of the United Nations transport Conventions,

Welcoming the outcome of the ministerial meeting of the Inland Transport Committee, held on 21 February 2017, and the resolution on "Embracing the new era for sustainable inland transport and mobility",

Noting the recommendation of the Economic Commission for Europe,

Decides to mandate the Inland Transport Committee of ECE to report to the Economic and Social Council on an annual basis for information purposes, while leaving the organizational structure of the ECE secretariat as well as the

programme-budgeting functions and oversight unchanged, paying special attention to issues of global regulatory governance through the United Nations transport conventions and other means.

United Nations E/2017/15/Add.2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
31 May 2017

Original: English

2017 session
28 July 2016-27 July 2017
Agenda item 15
Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General*

Addendum

Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Summary

The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields contains information on the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-third session, held in Bangkok from 15 to 19 May 2017. The full texts of the resolutions are available from www.regionalcommissions.org/our-work/regional-commissions-sessions-resolutions-and-decisions.

* The present report was submitted late owing to the need to incorporate the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its seventy-third session, which ended on 19 May 2017.

17-08809 (E) 070617

Please recycle

Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

1. At its seventy-third session, held in Bangkok from 15 to 19 May 2017, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted a number of resolutions relating to its programme of work, a summary of which is set out below for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.

Resolution 73/1
A conference structure of the Commission aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

2. The Commission decided to revise, with immediate effect, its conference structure, to ensure that it is fit for purpose and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1). In that connection, the Commission decided that the subsidiary structure of the Commission shall also include the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, whose terms of reference are annexed to the resolution, and that regional institutions under the auspices of the Commission shall include the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management. The Commission invited development partners to collaborate with it in promoting sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region; requested the Executive Secretary to continue to strengthen and promote communication, cooperation and collaboration among the relevant organizations of the United Nations development system in Asia and the Pacific in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; and also requested the Executive Secretary to continue to undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation of the conference structure and its congruence with the programme priorities of the Commission, with a view to increasing efficiency, effectiveness and synergies. The Commission decided to conduct a review of the conference structure in 2022, with a midpoint review in 2019, and requested the Executive Secretary to submit a report, with a focus on the programme areas of the Commission, to serve as the basis for that review.

Resolution 73/2
Strengthening the regional mechanism for the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024

3. The Commission reaffirmed that the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 (General Assembly resolution 69/137, annex II) constitutes a fundamental framework for genuine partnerships between landlocked developing countries, transit countries and their development partners at the national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels. The Commission invited landlocked developing countries, transit countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other stakeholders to implement, at all levels, the relevant actions agreed upon in the Vienna Programme of Action under its priorities for action, including fundamental transit policy issues, infrastructure development and maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation and means of implementation.

4. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to continue to support the development efforts of landlocked developing countries; to continue to provide all possible assistance to Asia-Pacific landlocked developing countries in the

implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action; to continue to ensure the coordinated follow-up to and monitoring of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and submit related annual analytical reports; and to report to the Commission at its seventy-fifth session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

Resolution 73/3
Advancing integrated and seamless connectivity for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

5. The Commission resolved to continue efforts and cooperation on regional connectivity to achieve integrated and seamless connectivity and encourage members and associate members to promote dialogue on policy coordination and cooperation in the areas of infrastructure, trade, finance, people-to-people exchanges, transport, energy and information and communications technology. The Commission invited member States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway network, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports.

6. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to continue to explore ways to comprehensively integrate sustainable development into regional connectivity and the regional integration process; to continue to provide the support necessary to promote integrated and seamless connectivity for sustainable development in the areas of transport, trade, energy and information and communications technology in the region; to continue efforts to facilitate discussions, provide capacity-building and policy advice, and exchange of best practices among members and associate members on applying new innovative technologies to connectivity; to continue to cooperate with members and associate members to support their effective implementation of infrastructure projects associated with national, subregional, and regional initiatives; to prepare a report on integrated and seamless connectivity for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific in 2018, to be updated every three years until 2030; and to continue to build and strengthen partnerships between the Commission and key stakeholders to promote integrated and seamless connectivity and sustainable development.

Resolution 73/4
Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific

7. The Commission endorsed the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/73/15/Add.1) and encouraged all parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network to consider accession to the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network.

8. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021) (E/ESCAP/73/15/Add.1, annex I); carry out in 2021 an evaluation of the implementation of phase I and submit a report with recommendations to the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its fourth session; accelerate the ongoing work towards the establishment and full functioning of the interregional coordination committee on transport between Asia and Europe; continue to support the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network; and report to the Commission at its seventy-fifth and seventy-seventh sessions on the implementation of the resolution.

Resolution 73/5
Strengthening Asia-Pacific's support for the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14

9. The Commission called upon members and associate members to support the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and encouraged them to consider making voluntary commitments, to share good practices, lessons learned and information on partnerships on oceans and seas, and to continue to enhance their capacity in relation to the sustainable management and use of oceans.

10. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to continue to support current partnerships, as well as developing new partnerships, where appropriate, and the Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. It also requested the Executive Secretary to continue to support countries, especially the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in sharing experiences and cooperation on the management of natural resources, including oceans and seas, in the light of the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/73/31, annex II). It further requested the Executive Secretary to continue to support current regional partnerships and develop new regional partnerships for enhancing data and statistical capacities in relation to Goal 14.

Resolution 73/6
Implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative through regional cooperation

11. The Commission invited members and associate members to cooperate in the implementation of the Master Plan for the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (E/ESCAP/CICTSTI(1)/2) and the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway Regional Cooperation Framework Document (E/ESCAP/CICTSTI(1)/3), as endorsed by the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation at its first session. It also invited members and associate members to promote broad-based partnerships, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, in support of the implementation of the Master Plan and the Framework Document.

12. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to accord priority to the implementation of the Master Plan and the Framework Document; to continue to conduct research and analysis and capacity development to identify challenges and opportunities associated with the four pillars of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative and the implementation of the strategic initiatives included in the Master Plan, including support for formulating regional, subregional and national action plans; to maximize opportunities created by the subregional offices and regional institutions of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in order to advance implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway; and to report to the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation at its second session on the progress made in the implementation of the Master Plan.

Resolution 73/7
Enhancing regional cooperation for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Asia and the Pacific

13. The Commission invited members and associate members to enhance the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

(General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II) and relevant initiatives, including the Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, with a view to ensuring more systematic cooperation, coherence and integration between disaster and health risk management. The Commission encouraged members and associate members, the United Nations and other international organizations and agencies, as well as all other stakeholders in the relevant fields, as appropriate, to provide support to the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management and to cooperate for the achievement of its objectives and the implementation of its work programme. The Commission invited member States to participate at the highest level in the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Ulaanbaatar from 16 to 19 July 2018. The Commission invited members and associate members to consider contributing financial and other support to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries in order to strengthen people-centred multi-hazard early warning systems in the region. It also invited them to observe World Tsunami Awareness Day.

14. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to accord priority to synchronizing multidisciplinary support to member States in the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in their development strategies, in line with the Sendai Framework and with the Sustainable Development Goals and targets relating to disaster risk reduction. It also requested the Executive Secretary to enhance inter-agency coordination with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and other relevant entities; to continue to support the work of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific, including on a disaster-related statistics framework and its implementation guidelines for the enhancement of the capacity of national statistical systems in the region to produce and use disaster-related statistics; to continue to support and facilitate multi-hazard early warning systems, impact-based forecasting and disaster risk assessment to strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms; and to continue to accord priority to the implementation of the plan of action in promoting regional cooperation on space applications for the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Resolution 73/8

Strengthening regional cooperation for sustainable energy development in Asia and the Pacific

15. The Commission endorsed the report of the Committee on Energy on its first session (E/ESCAP/73/30). It encouraged all members and associate members to develop and strengthen national, bilateral and multilateral programmes and projects aimed at strengthening regional energy cooperation and energy security as a driver to facilitate economic growth, social equality and prosperity, as well as environmental sustainability; to support energy projects that contribute to energy security in all its aspects in the region; to actively share experiences on their energy sector transition to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and advanced and cleaner fossil fuel technologies; and to formulate and implement innovative energy policies that are economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound. The Commission decided to adjust its conference structure with regard to specific issues to be addressed by the Committee on Energy in order to enhance its alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

16. The Commission encouraged all members and associate members to participate in Expo 2017, on the theme "Future energy", which will be hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan in Astana from June to September 2017, and in the Ministerial Conference and the Eighth International Forum on Energy for

Sustainable Development, which will be held from 11 to 14 June 2017. The Commission created two expert working groups on energy connectivity and on universal access to modern energy services, renewable energy, energy efficiency and cleaner use of fossil fuels and emphasized that the Executive Secretary should utilize the outputs of the expert working groups in preparing reports for intergovernmental discussions at the Committee on Energy and the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum.

17. The Commission requested the Executive Secretary to continue to assist members and associate members in building their capacity; to continue to conduct analytical studies and compile and disseminate relevant energy information and data; to contribute to the development of an inclusive and comprehensive set of recommendations for the agenda of the second Asian and Pacific Energy Forum; and to convene a preparatory meeting for the Forum.

Resolution 73/9
Regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

18. The Commission endorsed the report of the Fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (E/ESCAP/73/31) and the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/73/31, annex II) and called upon member States to cooperate in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as provided for by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1 and, at the regional level, in the light of the regional road map.

19. The Commission reiterated its request to the Executive Secretary to support member States in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda in an integrated manner and in the light of the regional road map. It requested the Executive Secretary, as convener of the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, to strengthen and promote communication, cooperation and collaboration among the relevant organizations of the United Nations system in the Asia-Pacific region and other stakeholders, in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by member States, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Pacific island developing countries.